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ABSTRACT

Researchers who have focused on issues of interpersonal communication in organizations have concluded that it is an essential component of organizational life. This paper presents findings of a study that examined the role conceptions of principals in the Centenial Schools Program (CSP) and those of principals in non-CSP schools. Communicator Style Measure (CSM) was sent to 136 Alabama members of the Society for Human Resource Management. A total of 109 managers responded, an 80 percent rate of return. Seventy-two percent of the respondents reported a positive communicator image. However, nearly 30 percent were uncertain or held a negative opinion about their personal communicator style. CSP principals report practices emphasizing shared decision making and partnerships; however, there is little differences between CSP and non-CSP principals regarding some significant reform elements, e.g., involving parents in core technology activities. Future research is necessary to determine the impact of human resource managers with low communicator images on the success of organizations. The findings have implications for all leaders, including principals, who are the instructional supervisors and human resource managers for their schools. A principal's communicator image may affect his or her ability to attract the best teachers for the school (Contains 18 references.) (LMI)

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Does Restructuring Make a Difference for the Principal? Role Conceptions of Principals in Restructuring Schools

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School restructuring involves changes in the principal's role (Bredeson, 1993; Hart, 1993; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Murphy, & Louis, 1994). Most research on the role of the principal in restructuring schools has focused on how principals enact their roles. This current body of research suggests school restructuring influences how principals enact certain elements of their role including decision making, problem solving, staff relations, and resource/environment management (Goldring, 1992; Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger, & Hausman, 1994; Hart, 1994).

Although related research shows that *role conception* influences principals' practice, we know little about the ways principals in restructuring schools conceive of their role. Further, factors that may be related to principals' role conceptions have received relatively little attention (Crow, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991). As more schools evolve through restructuring programs, policy planners, educators, and parents seek to know more about the principals who lead them. This paper addresses one aspect of this issue by illuminating some differences and similarities in role conception between principals participating in a state sponsored restructuring program called the Centennial Schools Program (CSP), and principals of schools not designated as Centennial Schools.

The CSP was chosen for the context of this study because it is similar in many respects to restructuring programs currently described in the literature on school reform (Crow & Peterson, 1992; Goldring, 1992; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; McPherson &

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Crowson, 1994; Murphy & Louis, 1994). The CSP, like many restructuring efforts around the globe, contains structures that have implications for the principals' role. These structures include systemic decentralized authority, participative decision making, school accountability, and schools' relationships with their external environments (Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992).

Changes in the essential structures and relationships within schools are reshaping the roles of principals (Bredeson, 1993; Crow, 1993; Hart & Bredeson, 1996; Murphy & Louis, 1994). As Hart & Bredeson (1996) note,

> . . . a significant body of evidence exists that today's schools are different professional work environments from those of a decade ago. These differences are especially apparent in day-to-day working relationships among teachers and principals. As leadership responsibilities and traditional mechanisms of control are shared among teachers and principals, the traditional role of principals is continually redefined. (p. 143)

Yet, few empirical studies address the changing role of the principal in restructuring schools.

> In contrast with the abundant prescriptive literature on leadership and school restructuring, empirical reports of how the principals' role changes in schools that undertake fundamental restructuring are scarce. (Hallinger & Hausman, 1994. p. 155)

Of particular interest to this study is the way administrators shape their role conception which plays an active part in the implementation of reform strategies in settings such as Centennial Schools (Chapman & Boyd, 1986; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Hart & Murphy, 1994).

> The formal job descriptions for a principal of a conventionally structured school and in a restructured school are usually not very different, but . . . one is struck by the differences in the . . . role. *These differences were evident in the way in which*

> *principals define their roles, decision-making processes and structures, relationships with staff, and use of knowledge and time.* (emphasis added) (Rosenblum, et.al, 1994. p. 103)

Learning more about how principals conceive their roles in restructured schools may increase our understandings of school reforms, and factors needed to facilitate reform efforts.

Description of Centennial School Program

The Centennial School Program is a reform model that emphasizes strategic planning and site-based management at local school sites. Created by legislation (Utah House Bill 100) in 1993, the Utah State Office of Education and the Governors' office sponsored the Centennial School Program in cooperation with local school districts. There are currently 262 Centennial Schools in Utah, out of a total 733 Utah schools.

When a school is designated as a Centennial school, Utah law (Utah Code 53A-1a-301) requires school districts to delegate certain powers to a site-based board of school directors. The school's board of directors may include teachers, parents, students, community members, and principals from local school sites.

To qualify to be a Centennial school, a school board of directors must agree to five things:

- integrate technology into the school's curriculum and student assessment
- develop a strategic plan that includes ways to develop partnerships between the school and businesses
- clearly define the performance goals of students
- create personalized education and occupation plans for students

- involve patrons in decision making at the school.

A selection board chosen by the Utah State Office of Education reviews applications for Centennial Schools and makes selections for the following school year. At the end of each school year, a team composed of State Office of Education staff do an on-site evaluation of the school concerning its Centennial Plan. If the school is not meeting its goals as outlined in the plan, funding for the following year is withheld until the school comes into compliance.

Research Context

The research context of this study includes two bodies of literature. First, the literature regarding the effects that reform programs have on principals' roles is reviewed. Next, we examine the literature on principals' role conceptions.

School Reform and the Principal's Role

The literature on the principal's role suggests that principals have typically assumed roles that reflect the context in which they live and work (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Kerchner, 1988).

> Historical periods in school administration carry labels that, with reasonable accuracy, capture the social role and underlying value prescriptions for those occupying leadership positions. (Kerchner, 1988, p. 381)

Similarly, Beck and Murphy (1993) use a framework of metaphor analysis to examine the changing role of the principal over the last 70 years. "We discovered that conceptions of the principalship have evolved over time, resulting in dramatically different role expectations in each of the last seven decades." (p.4). Beck and Murphy (1993) describe seven major changes in the role of the principal since the 1920s: value broker (1920s);

scientific manager (1930s); democratic leader (1940s); theory-guided administrator (1950s); bureaucratic executive (1960s); humanistic facilitator (1970s); and instructional leader (1980s).

Similarly, Button (1966) states that principals have experienced five role changes that include being: 1) a teacher of teachers: 1870-1885; 2) an applied philosopher: 1855-1905; 3) business manager: 1905-1930; 4) technical expert: 1935-1950; 5) an administrative scientist: 1955-1960s.

More recently, Hallinger (1992) notes that principals' roles evolved since the 1920s from administrative manager, through program manager in the 1960s, to an instructional leader in the 1980s. Hallinger (1992) brings the context of the current study into focus by suggesting that principals are experiencing a new evolution in their role from an instructional leader to a transformational leader who is responsible for the restructuring of schools. As in the past, principals' roles continue to evolve and change, reflecting the reforming contexts in which principals work (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Bredeson, 1991; Crow & Peterson, 1992; Crow, 1993; Goldring, 1992; Greenfield, 1991; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1992; Murphy, 1990). However, before the current restructuring movement, the role of the principal, although evolutionary, focused on the implementation of policy developed outside the school. Restructuring models move the fundamental responsibility from authority structures outside the school to local schools and the principal (Hallinger, 1992).

> The term 'restructuring' suggests an explicit attempt to reshape the school so it can better identify and meet locally determined needs. The school is now viewed as the unit responsible for the initiation of change, not just the implementation of changes conceived by others . . . (Hallinger, 1992, p.40.)

As responsibilities shift to the school, "The traditional roles of principals and other educators in schools are changing and will continue to be reshaped, redefined and renegotiated as restructuring occurs." (Bredeson, 1993, p. 34)

Restructuring is a context that is redefining the role of the principal in certain ways. Nevertheless, in what ways do principals change their roles in restructuring schools? Murphy (1994) suggests principals' roles change in areas including delegating leadership responsibilities, developing collaborative decision making processes, enacting shared management, fostering shared visions among stakeholders, and networking with those in the schools' external environment.

Moreover, Murphy and Hallinger (1992) found most restructuring models influence principals' roles regarding shared decision making, participatory management, boundary spanning, and accountability. Further, Crow and Peterson (1992) note that restructuring causes principals to include more people in decision making and to serve as boundary spanners with other organizations. The context of the Centennial School Program, in which this study takes place, parallels these restructuring efforts. Similar elements include issues of school governance, accountability, decision making, resource management/planning, and relationships with entities in the external environment. (Johnson, 1995)

As indicated by the school restructuring literature and descriptions of the Centennial model, the CSP offers a good context in which to explore the changing roles of principals in restructuring schools. Constructs within the CSP model having implications

for the role of the principal include: accountability, decision making tactics, devolution of power to the school, participative governance of the school, and changing relationships with organizations outside the schools' environment.

Principals' Role Conceptions

The following discussion examines how principals conceive their role, and explores how their role conceptions relate to elements of a reform project such as the Centennial School Program.

Roles are "characteristic, systematic patterns of interactions among elements of a social group" (Hart, 1993, p. 126). As members of a group develop shared expectations for a person holding a certain position, such as principal, roles associated with that position begin to form (Biddle, 1979). As individuals act on the expectations of the group, role identities take shape. However, individuals such as principals bring experiences, values, and beliefs to their current role. These experiences and beliefs interact with the expectations of the group to help shape the formation of an individuals' new role (Argyris, 1957).

To explore these issues, role theory takes either a structuralist point of view, or an interactionist perspective. The interactionist point of view focuses on the creation of roles through interactions between the role holder and group members within the organization (Bredeson, 1993). The structuralist view suggests that roles are composed of a set of expectations within a group. One enacts a role by meeting those expectations. For example, teachers, parents, and students expect principals to act in certain ways. As the principal works to meet these expectations, the role of the principal is enacted. Hart

(1993) notes:

> ". . . roles are associated with social positions, such as principal, that constitute forms of identity and fulfill established functions within the group. They designate a commonly recognized set of persons, and each role incumbent is expected to behave in characteristic ways that define the role." (p.126)

In this study, principals bring their own values and beliefs to the school organization. For CSP principals, these individual factors interact with elements of the Centennial Program to help form the conception of principals' roles. Argyris (1957) argues that ". . . in real life the formal structure [such as the elements of the Centennial Program] and individuals are continuously interacting and transacting . . . " in ways that impact both the role of the individual and the organization.(parenthetical expression added) (p. 1) This interactionist perspective is useful to this study in framing the investigation of how personal values, beliefs, and reform structures like the Centennial program are related to the role of the principal.

Hart (1993) notes

> When people largely internalize the existing social definition of a role like the high school principalship, they experience primarily role taking. Through a process of continual testing and reframing people assess their success at fulfilling the role expectation of the group in very conventional ways . . . Role making or role development occurs when a person substantially modifies the tasks, expectations, norms, or beliefs about a social role. In role making people consciously and unconsciously enact and alter the role. (p. 127)

Although such notions of role-making and role-taking are generally used to study new members of organizations, this study draws on recent research that uses the framework of social role theory to look at leaders who remain in the same *positions* while the *context* of their school organization changes through restructuring efforts such as the

CSP (Bredeson, 1993; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Goldring, 1992). In the restructured organizational context of the Centennial school, people must learn new roles, or adapt old roles to changing structures within the school.

Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to report on a study of the role conceptions of principals in the CSP restructuring program and those of principals in non-CSP schools. The following question guides the study:

> Do CSP principals have different attitudes and beliefs regarding parent involvement, site-based management, decision-making, partnerships, and planning than do non-CSP principals?

Sample

This study builds on a data set created by a comprehensive survey of Utah school administrators. The Utah Education Policy Center conducted the survey for the Utah Consortium of Educational Leaders (UCEL) in September 1995. The Policy Center sent the UCEL survey to all Utah administrators in schools and district offices. Eleven hundred surveys were distributed to Utah school administrators; 561 were completed and returned for a return rate of 51%. Of those returning the survey, 152 were principals in Centennial schools. Centennial principals returning the survey represent 58% of the total 262 Centennial principals state wide.

Instrumentation and Analysis

The UCEL survey contains data useful to examining how Utah administrators conceptualize their role and in exploring principals' role conception. The UCEL survey focused on questions that illuminate the following descriptions of administrators in Utah:

demographics, educational and professional backgrounds, administrative preparation and professional development, descriptions of work and other activities, attitudes about their jobs, policy and practice issues, decision making tactics, curriculum issues, school governance issues, resource management, and political/environment issues.

The UCEL survey contains responses from Centennial School principals and non-CSP principals that relate to elements of their role conceptions defined in the Centennial School model. The elements that have implications for principals' roles and corresponding questions from the survey include the following:

a) How do principals conceptualize their role as a **site-based manager**? "The school directors may request a waiver from the local board of education of any provision . . . " and, ". . . [the] local school board delegates to school directors the authority to make decisions at the school level on teacher career ladders, technology in the classroom, class size reduction, and any other areas related to strategic planning at the school level that are specifically outlined in the [Centennial School] document." (Centennial application, p. 12-13)

> *IV.7 As a principal, what degree of autonomy do you have in making decisions concerning your school? (UCEL survey, p. 9)*

b) How do principals conceptualize their role in **participatory decision making**? "Site based decision making means a joint planning and problem solving process that seeks to improve the quality of working life and education . . . a cooperative effort . . . comprising teachers, classified employees, school administrators, and parents . . . ". (Centennial application, p. 13)

> *IV.1. Listed below are examples of key decisions made within a school and groups who may or may not have input into those decisions. . . . indicate the degree of input each group has on decisions made at your school (Groups include building level administrators, teachers, parents, and district level administrators) (UCEL survey, p. 8)*
>
> *IV.2. (Same as IV.1) . . .indicate the degree of input you would like each group to have on decision making at your school (Same groups as before) (UCEL survey, p. 9)*

Both of these questions presented respondents with areas of decision making such as, hiring, curriculum development, budget development, and selection of curriculum.

C) How do principals view their role in **planning** at the school level? "There is established a Centennial Schools Program to assist the state's public schools in accomplishing the mission of public education outlined in Section 53A-1a-103 and to facilitate strategic planning for educational excellence at the school level . . . " and, "the implementation of a strategic planning process by the applicant school . . . " (Centennial application, p.13)

IV.6 How many hours per week do you spend on long range planning or strategic planning? (UCEL survey, p. 9)

d) How do principals conceptualize their role in **spanning the boundaries** between the school and other entities? "[The school will] establish strategies to involve business and industry at the school through partnerships or adoption programs [and] involve collaborative services from other state and local agencies such as Health, Human Services, and the juvenile courts" (Centennial Application, p. 13)

IV.3. As a principal how many hours per week do you spend working with private businesses to build partnerships, coalitions, apprenticeships, etc.? (UCEL survey, p. 9)

e) How do principals conceptualize their role in relation to **parent involvement**? "[The school will] provide for extensive involvement by parents of students at the school in developing a personalized education plan . . . " (Centennial application, p. 13)

IV.8 To what degree do the following groups participate in developing student educational plans: building administrators, teachers, parents, and district administrators? (UCEL survey, p. 9)

IV.10 Indicate the areas in which you feel parents/community should be involved in your school. (UCEL survey, p.10) (This question presented a list of possible parental activities, e.g., evaluation of curriculum or instruction, evaluation of school personnel, fund raising for school projects, volunteer services for general administrative tasks, and instructional assistance in the classroom.)

Descriptive statistics were used to identify respondents' views in these areas of

role conception. In order to examine the similarities and differences in attitudes and beliefs between CSP principals and non-CSP principals, t-tests and cross tabulations were used.

Results

The data suggest that CSP principals are similar in many respects to other principals in Utah, but important differences were also found between the two groups. We begin this section by describing the demographic profiles of CSP principals and non-CSP principals to paint a descriptive picture of the two groups. Then, we organize the findings around the elements of the CSP that have implications for role conceptions of principals. These elements include decision making, community involvement and partnerships, site-based management, and planning.

Demographics

CSP and non-CSP principals are similar in many demographic respects, including race, religious preference, and marital status. Yet, some demographic differences were found. Table 1 compares CSP and non-CSP principals on several demographic factors to illustrate these similarities and differences.

Table 1. Personal Characteristics.
Centennial Principals (CSP) vs. Non-Centennial Principals (Non-CSP)

Characteristics	CSP (%)	Non-CSP (%)
Gender***		
Females	44.1	21.3
Males	55.9	78.7
Age	47.6 yrs	48.1 yrs

Marital Status		
Single	5.1	4.8
Married	86.8	90.4
Divorced	5.9	4.4
Widowed	2.2	0.4
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian-American	0.7	0.4
African-American	1.5	0.4
Caucasian	94.1	96.8
Hispanic	1.5	1.6
Polynesian	1.5	0.0
Other	0.7	0.8
Religious Preference		
Catholic	2.2	4.1
Latter-Day Saints	80.1	84.4
Protestant	9.6	7.0
No Religion	5.9	3.7
Other	2.2	0.8
Political preference		
Democrat	26.5	25.3
Republican	44.7	54.3
Independent	22.7	15.1
Other	6.1	3.4
Spouse employed*		
Yes	74.6	64.3
No	25.4	35.7
Residence--school boundary ***		
Inside	19.1	35.5
Outside	80.9	64.5
Residence--district boundary ***		
Inside	63.5	75.5
Outside	36.5	24.5

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$ *** $p<.001$

In a simple count more men than women are CSP principals (55.9% compared to 44.1% respectively). But such a simple comparison obscures the fact that of all female

administrators, 53.1% of them are CSP principals, while only 27.9% of all male principals fill such a role. CSP principals also differ, although not significantly, in their political leanings: non-CSP principals are more likely to be Republican (54.3% compared with 44.7% of CSP principals). Finally, these two groups differ in regard to their residence. CSP principals are less likely to live within their school boundaries than are non-CSP principals (19.1% compared with 35.3%, $p<.001$) as well as less likely to live within their district boundaries (63.5% compared with 75.5%, $p<.001$).

Role Conception

The Centennial School Program contains requirements with implications for how principals conceive their role in leading the school. For instance, the CSP requires participatory decision making, site-based management, increased planning at the school level, and partnerships with businesses and other community organizations. Yet, do Centennial principals report different attitudes and practices regarding these issues than do non-CSP principals? To address these questions, the survey asked principals to respond to questions regarding these CSP features.

Participatory decision making. The survey asked principals to rate how much decision making influence parents, district administrators, building administrators, and teachers have in their school. Centennial principals showed a general tendency to include school constituencies in some areas of decision making more often than non-CSP principals. Three key areas of participatory decision making illustrate this tendency: developing budget, hiring staff, and building business partnerships. On a scale of 1*[never]* to 5 *[always]*, CSP principals reported a higher degree of influence by building

administrators, parents, and teachers in budget development than non-CSP principals (see table 2 below). Similarly, CSP principals reported higher levels of influence by teachers in the hiring process than did non-CSP principals (3.9 compared to 3.6, $p<.001$--see Table 3). CSP principals also indicated greater influence by building level administrators in decisions regarding forming business partnerships (4.6 compared to 4.4, $p<.005$--see Table 4). Examining Tables 2, 3, and 4 demonstrates that CSP principals reported less decision making influence by the district office than did non-CSP principals, although this difference was statistically significant only in the area of hiring decisions (3.3 compared to 3.6, $p<.01$).

Table 2. Degree of Influence in Budget Development

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	3.8	4.4**	1.9*	3.1**
Non-CSP	4.1	4.1	1.7	2.7

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 3. Degree of Influence in Hiring

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	3.3*	4.8	1.8	3.9**
Non-CSP	3.6	4.7	1.8	3.6

*p<.01 **p<.001

Table 4. Degree of Influence in Building Business Partnerships

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	3.2	4.6*	3.2	3.4
Non-CSP	3.4	4.4	3.0	3.3

*p<.005

The survey also asked principals to rank the decision making influence of the groups mentioned above not only "as it is" in their schools, but "as it should be" (Tables 5-7 present the findings regarding principals' beliefs of what should exist regarding decision making influence.). When Tables 2-7 are compared, the findings indicate that both CSP and non-CSP principals believe that building administrators, parents, and teachers should have more input in decisions of budget, hiring, and building business partnerships than they now have. However, it is important to note that neither group of principals believed that parents' input in budget development and hiring should be at high levels comparable to other school constituents. The mean degree of input reported by both CSP and non-CSP principals is less than three regarding both budget development and hiring *(3=Sometimes* on a scale of *1= Never* to *5= Always*).

Table 5. Degree of Influence (as it should be) in Budget Development

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	2.8**	4.8	2.8**	4.0*
Non-CSP	3.5	4.7	2.4	3.5

*p<.005 **<.001

Table 6. Degree of Influence (as it should be) in Hiring

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	2.8*	4.9	2.9*	4.3*
Non-CSP	3.2	4.8	2.6	4.1

*p<.01

Table 7. Degree of Influence (as it should be) in Building Business Partnerships

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	3.8	4.7*	4.2**	4.5**
Non-CSP	3.8	4.5	3.9	4.0

*p<.05 **<p.005

Although the role conception of CSP and non-CSP principals generally differs in regard to these areas of decision making, these two groups are similar in other areas of school decisions. Around issues of curriculum and instruction, both groups of principals agree on how much involvement district administrators, parents, and teachers should have. Tables 8 and 9 indicate no difference in the way CSP and non-CSP principals view involvement of district administrators, building administrators, parents, and teachers in the selection of curriculum and instructional methods.

Table 8. Degree of Influence in Selection of Curriculum

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	4.1	3.9	2.3	4.1
Non-CSP	4.1	3.9	2.3	4.1

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Table 9. Degree of Influence in Selection of Instructional Methods

Principals	Dist. Admin.	Bldg. Admin.	Parents	Teachers
CSP	3.1	3.8	2.0	4.7
Non-CSP	3.0	3.8	2.0	4.7

These data regarding participatory decision making demonstrate that the role conceptions of Centennial and non-Centennial principals are similar in that both groups are reluctant to increase the decision making influence of parents to a comparable level with building administrators and teachers. Also neither group tends to include parents in core technology decisions of the school. However, Centennial principals are more likely to include school constituents in decision making regarding non-instructional areas of the school at a slightly higher level than non-CSP principals.

Community involvement and building partnerships. Besides the area of decision making, Centennial Principals, more so than non-CSP principals, reported that parents and community members should be involved in other aspects of running the school. Principals selected from the following list those areas in which parents and community members should be involved:

- Curriculum development
- Development of rules and procedures for student discipline
- Evaluation of curriculum or instruction
- Evaluation of school or classroom climate

- Evaluation of school personnel
- Fund raising for school projects
- Instructional assistance in the classroom
- Review and evaluation of instructional materials
- Selection of school personnel
- Student activity planning
- Supervision of student activities
- Volunteer services for general administrative tasks
- Review committees for appeals on student rights and responsibilities
- Review and evaluation of school grading and reporting practices.

From this list, CSP principals identified more areas of parent and community involvement as appropriate than did non-CSP principals (7.5 compared with 6.5, $p<.005$). Moreover, in response to questions about how much time they spent working with businesses and other agencies to build partnerships, CSP principals reported more time devoted to forming these alliances than did non-CSP principals (2.1 hours compared with 1.4 hours building business partnerships, $p<.001$; and 2.4 compared with 2.0 hours collaborating with other public agencies, $p<.05$ respectively). These data suggest that CSP principals conceptualized their role in ways that involved others in these areas of school management to a greater degree than non-CSP principals. Table 10 shows the relative commitment of CSP and non-CSP principals to involving others in these areas of school management and partnership development.

Table 10. Parental and Community Involvement in School Management and Partnerships.

	CSP Principals	Non-CSP Principals
Parent Involvement (mean number of categories)	7.536 categories**	6.484 categories
Hours Spent Working to Build Business Partnerships (per week)	2.06 hours***	1.4 hours
Hours Spent Collaborating with Other Agencies (per week)	2.4 hours*	2.0 hours

*p<.05 **p<.005 ***p<.001

Site-based management and planning. Although the CSP is built on a site-based management model, CSP principals and non-CSP principals report they have the same amount of autonomy in running their schools (a mean of 3.0 for both groups). Similarly, though long range planning is required by the CSP legislation, both groups of principals report they spend about the same amount of time (2.5 to 2.6 hours per week) in long range planning with staff and parents.

Discussion and Implications

Comparisons between Centennial principals and non-Centennial principals regarding demographics and features of role conception resulted in the following major findings.

- Although there are more male than female Centennial principals, females are more likely to be Centennial principals than males. Non-Centennial

principals are more likely to live within their school and district boundaries and be republican in their political leanings.

- Centennial principals spend more time building partnerships between the school and other agencies/businesses than do non-CSP principals.
- Centennial principals involve school constituents more in budget, hiring, and business partnership decisions than non-Centennial principals and believe they should be involved more. Both groups are reluctant to involve parents in hiring and budget decisions to a degree comparable to teachers and administrators.
- Centennial principals involve district level administrators less in school decisions and believe district administrators should be involved less than they now are.
- CSP principals and non-CSP principals do not differ on issues of decision-making and management when it involves curriculum and instruction.
- CSP principals and non-CSP principals spend about the same amount of time doing long range planning.
- Centennial principals believe they have about the same amount of autonomy in running their schools as do non-CSP principals.

Demographically, a larger percentage of female principals as a group are CSP administrators compared with male principals. One possibility to account for this larger percentage of women CSP principals may be related to the strong bias of the CSP model to involve others in running the school. Other research suggests women are more likely than men to share authority when they are in leadership positions (Shakeshaft, 1986; Peters and Waterman, 1982). This relatively large number of female CSP principals may have implications for implementation of the CSP model if indeed female leaders tend to value change and participatory management in ways different from male school leaders (Crow & Glascock, 1995).

Beyond gender issues, reported demographic differences between CSP and non-CSP principals may provide insights into the role conceptions of principals. The data show, for instance, that CSP principals are less likely than non-CSP administrators to live within their school and district boundaries. This may suggest that involving parents in school management may be more difficult if those parents come from a principals' own neighborhood. Some degree of geographic separation between principals and parents may be attractive to principals within this model.

Besides demographics, the data reveal other differences and similarities between CSP and non-CSP principals. Overall, both groups of principals believe school constituents should be involved in issues such as hiring and budget development more than they now are. This raises the issue of why principals do not involve parents and others more in school decisions and activities. It may be that other structures within the school system prohibit principals from involving others in decision making and school management to the degree their role conceptions deem appropriate. Time constraints, district and state mandates, or issues of liability may discourage principals from forming more participative management teams.

Whatever the restraints may be, it appears that the structures of the CSP promote a tendency toward participative management. However, the data show that CSP and non-CSP principals tend to use parents very little in decisions and activities related to the core technology of the school. This finding parallels national research on principals' perceptions of parental involvement that suggests principals tend to use parent volunteers to do menial tasks (Pellicer et al., 1988). Perhaps the restructuring movement does not alter the role

conception of principals in ways that allow for participation of parents in the core technology of the school. This possibility is illustrated by our finding that CSP principals and non-CSP principals do not differ on how much they believe parents should be involved in curriculum and instruction decisions. Other recent research supports the notion that restructuring does not affect instructional activities (Peterson, McCarthey, and Elmore, 1996).

Moreover, issues of accountability may make it difficult for principals to involve others in more significant areas of school governance. If teachers and principals are held accountable even in informal ways for how students perform academically, principals may not want others determining curriculum and instruction within a school. Further, parent groups change as their children move through school, making continuity of decisions difficult. One group of parents may influence curriculum differently than another, causing continual curriculum redesign. Principals are bound by policy and financial constraints that do not allow for such rapid changes in curriculum and instruction.

Further, it is interesting to note that while the CSP is grounded in a site-based management model, CSP principals report they have about the same amount of autonomy as do non-CSP principals. When considered with the finding that CSP principals involve the district office less in running the school than other principals, this data leads us to ask from where do the restraints on principals' autonomy come? Could it be that CSP principals trade less restraint from the district office for more constraint due to increased parent involvement and partnership building? Do parents and partners create new constraints for CSP principals that lead to less autonomy? Nevertheless, partnerships

between schools and other entities such as businesses and service agencies are becoming more commonplace. Perhaps these new structures have implications for role conceptions of principals regarding autonomy and time allotment. These issues deserve further study.

Finally, the CSP originally emerged from the states' strategic plan, and included a fundamental emphasis on long range planning. Given such a focus on planning, we would expect CSP principals to engage in strategic planning at a greater level than non-CSP administrators--an expectation not found in our results. Further study is needed to tell us whether this lack of difference on strategic planning occurs because principals--both CSP and non-CSP--are so pressed for time that long range planning is not possible, or if other factors inhibit the long range planning process. Changing student needs and enrollments create difficulty for schools to plan for several years in advance. Short term planning may prove more efficient, though many business and government paradigms currently promote long range strategic planning as a management model, as does the CSP plan

Our findings suggest statistically significant differences between some reported attitudes and practices of CSP and non-CSP principals. However, substantive differences in many areas were small. For example, although the difference in how much time spent building business partnerships between CSP and non-CSP principals is statistically significant, the actual time spent by both groups is two hours per week or less. Similarly, a statistical difference was found for the degree to which CSP principals involved parents in school budget decisions compared with non-CSP principals (1.9 compared with 1.7). Clearly, neither group of principals wants parents to be involved to a great extent in budget development.

A possible explanation for the small substantive differences or lack of differences on these CSP features may be that some non-CSP schools were engaged in other reforms. Although the CSP is the major restructuring strategy of the state, individual schools may be using such elements as participatory decision making or business partnerships without formally applying and being accepted as a CSP school. This could weaken the comparisons between CSP and non-CSP principals.

Conclusion

> Policy implementation planners . . . would do well to recognize the crucial role that personal factors have in shaping principals' practices. Significant discrepancies between principals' values and beliefs [both factors of role conception] and those assumed by policy, are likely to become major obstacles to policy implementation. This suggests that implementation plans should provide for the discovery of such discrepancies and the explicit resolution of conflicts in beliefs and values (Trider & Leithwood, 1988, p.305)

CSP principals report practices and attitudes that are generally congruent with elements of the Centennial School Program, especially in regard to the features of shared decision making and partnerships. This should be encouraging to those associated with the CSP program. Previous research (Crow, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991; Trider & Leithwood, 1988) suggests that to succeed, reform programs such as the CSP must include basic elements that are congruent with role conceptions of principals. However, reformers may be discouraged with our finding that in regard to some significant reform elements, e.g., involving parents in core technology activities, there is little difference between CSP and non-CSP principals.

This study extends this literature by comparing reported attitudes and beliefs of

principals in one type of restructuring program with those of other principals. Studies such as the one reported in this paper may be useful to practitioners, policy makers, and those who train prospective principals because program design, administrator placement, and training are all variables that can be manipulated to foster the success of school reform efforts. Knowing more about the role conceptions of principals who are engaged in restructuring efforts like the Centennial School Program may enhance the success of similar reform projects.

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